

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Veteran Crisis Line
Dial **988** then press **1**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Wilmington VA Medical Center





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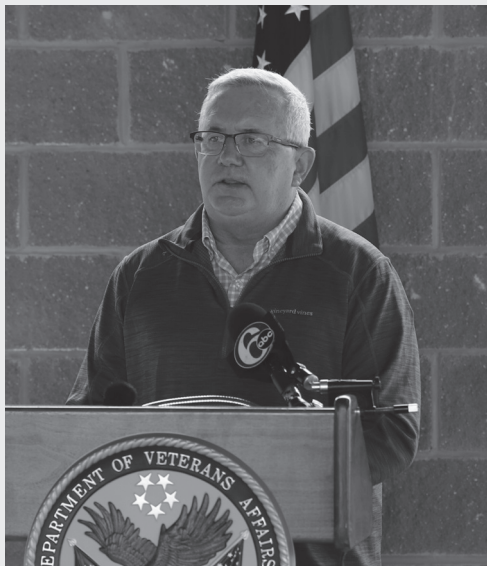
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VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.va.gov/wilmington-health-care

MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



It is my privilege to provide Veterans and key stakeholders with an annual update that highlights the Wilmington VAMC accomplishments in 2022 while also setting priorities for 2023 and beyond. As we continued our journey to becoming a high reliability organization, our focus remains on providing exceptional health care that promotes the health and wellbeing of the more than 41,000 Veterans who receive their care at the Wilmington VAMC and our five community-based outpatient clinics located in southern Delaware and southern New Jersey.

When defining exceptional care, it must include both being “state of the art” and that it is delivered in a caring and compassionate manner focused on what matters to the Veteran. Over the past year, we expanded access to virtual care, enhanced our commitment to mental health and suicide prevention, the opioid crisis embraced whole health, expanded our community partnerships while also providing routine, essential, and urgent care to Veterans.

In 2023, we will continue to promote and prioritize a “Veteran First” approach to care - offering more services closer to where Veterans call home. Additionally, we will be implementing the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. The PACT Act adds to the list of health conditions

that we assume (or “presume”) are caused by exposure to these substances. This law helps VA provide generations of Veterans and their survivors with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve. In November of 2022 we began to screen all enrolled Veterans for toxic exposure. Every Veteran enrolled in VA health care will receive an initial screening and a follow-up screening at least once every five years. Veterans who are not enrolled and who meet eligibility requirements will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening.

It is critically important we get the word out to all who have served and encourage them to apply for benefits and healthcare.

Other priorities for 2023 will focus on expanding services at our clinics, especially in southern New Jersey and Sussex County in Delaware. We will also be increasing our inpatient capacity expanding services for our aging veterans, modernizing our surgical programs, adding additional mental health and primary care services at all locations. As our focus on growth and innovation continues, we are emphasizing our partnerships with Rowan University and the University of Delaware to incorporate research and continuous learning that help prepare the next generation of VA providers and staff for a career in VA.

On behalf of our staff, I thank the Veterans and their families for continuing to choose us for health care. Please continue to take necessary safety precautions, reduce your risk of contracting COVID-19, and keep yourselves healthy. Please consider getting the COVID-19 vaccine booster shot—which is now readily available—as well as your annual flu shot.

It is my honor and privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,

Vince Kane

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

TEAM

Meet the Wilmington VA Medical Center leadership team



Kim Butler
Associate Director of
Operations



Kathleen Craige
Associate Director
Patient Care Services



Pamela LeDeaux
Chief of Staff



Tracey Schoen
Director of Quality Management

FEATURED

STORIES



Ambulance

The Veteran Transportation team developed a new plan to obtain its very own ambulance. By the end of 2022, the team completed 142 ambulance transportations. The team drove more than 2,500 miles and transported nine critical care patients, 23 advanced life support and 90 basic life support cases.



Access to Care

Wilmington continues to grow! More than 450,000 Veterans received health care with 48% getting care at our community outpatient clinics.

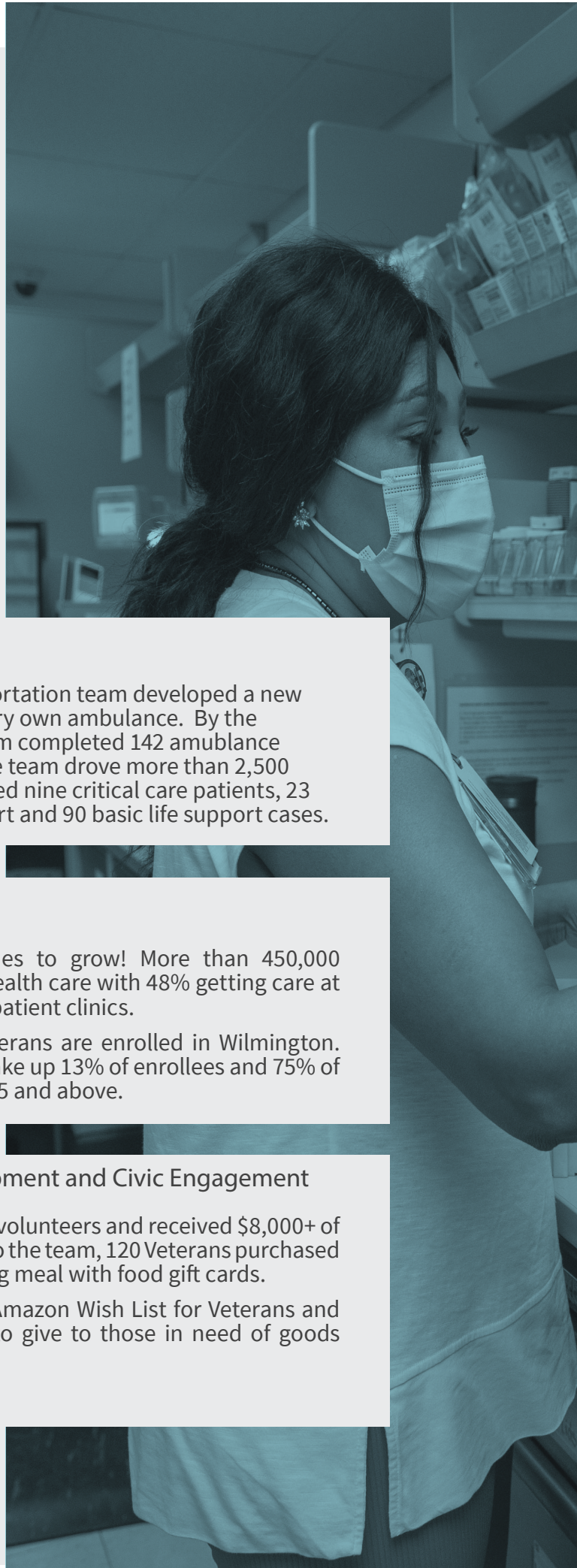
Roughly, 41,500 Veterans are enrolled in Wilmington. Women Veterans make up 13% of enrollees and 75% of enrollees are aged 55 and above.



Center for Development and Civic Engagement

Wilmington has 131 volunteers and received \$8,000+ of donations. Thanks to the team, 120 Veterans purchased a warm Thanksgiving meal with food gift cards.

CDCE also runs an Amazon Wish List for Veterans and collects donations to give to those in need of goods and items.



DIALYSIS



Out of 165 VA medical centers, the Wilmington VA dialysis team ranked third in the nation for its stellar clinical practices.

Despite the challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the dialysis team increased its patients' access to care from three to six days per week. The team tailored its delivery of care by integrating heated, massage chairs to increase clinical therapy.

"Our team used patient feedback to drive our operations and really wanted to make sure Veterans felt comfortable during their visits," David Dubuque, dialysis nurse manager at Wilmington VA said. "We increased patient satisfaction by adding heated massage chairs, which helps blood circulation and fatigue during the procedures."

According to a recent accreditation survey by The Joint Commission, the dialysis unit was regarded as a "beacon of best practices" and received zero findings, which is a very rare accomplishment for both VA and private health care systems. The Joint Commission is a national organization responsible for ensuring hospitals meet health care standards and regulations.

The steps taken by the dialysis team can also be seen throughout other health care services as Wilmington VA expands on its high reliability organization efforts. Originating from aviation and nuclear power, high reliability organizations use strategic practices and systems thinking within very complex and hazardous industries. The goal of being a high reliability organization is to prevent catastrophic incidents, strive for continuous improvements, and build a culture of safety where staff feel empowered to speak up.

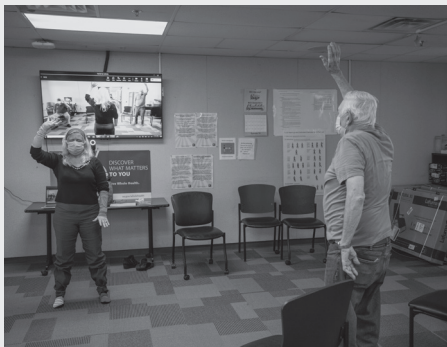
Renovations are underway on the first floor of the Wilmington VA Medical Center to create a larger dialysis unit to meet the demands of the growing Veteran population. The renovations expect to be completed in 12 to 18 months.

"We're continuing to develop improvement plans and identify expansion efforts to better serve the Veteran community," Dubuque said.



FEATURED

STORIES CON'T



Whole Health

The Whole Health team focused on equipping Veterans with self-care skills necessary to maintain their health as well as skills to manage common chronic diseases. Patients and staff reported feeling more relaxed and calm after attending tai chi and yoga sessions.

Whole Health offers on-demand videos to staff, night-shift staff and Veterans.



Food Bank

CDCE partnered with Food and Nutrition Services to reduce food insecurities for Veterans.

Roughly 120 Veterans purchased a warm Thanksgiving meal thanks to the team. More than \$7,700 in non-perishable foods was donated to the Wilmington VA Food Bank!



Community Partnerships

In New Jersey, the outreach team works with local law enforcement to help police better support a Veteran who may be in crisis.

In Delaware, the outreach team joined the Delaware's Governor Challenge and create a robust plan to expand on suicide prevention efforts.



BUILDING 13 OPENING

The Facilities and Engineering team stayed quite busy throughout 2022 as they helped improve and modernize our campus.

Renovations were made to building 13 in mid-2020. Since then, the building opened in April 2022.

The project consisted of a complete renovation of the entire 13,125 sq. ft of the building footprint. This included

the abatement of all hazardous materials, demolition of all existing utilities, roof replacement and removal of all architectural features to the outer cladding of the building.

The renovated space now includes an updated employee gym and modernized administrative space for VHA, VBA and VSO employees.



SAFETY

QUALITY

EXCELLENCE

OUR QUALITY MANAGEMENT TEAM



Tracey Schoen Dennis Tauchus Ryan Poulsen

Colleen Torres Robert O'Keefe Cheryl Acar

Providing safe, world-class health care is at the core of what we do.

The Quality Management team consists of utilization management, systems redesign, accreditation readiness, risk management, performance and patient safety.

In 2022, the team processed 888 JPSRs, nine root cause analysis, and completed seven risk assessments. Utilization management

was recognized as No. 1 in VISN 4 for its best practices and decreased readmission rates from 15.6% to under 6% for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Read more about the team's successes on page 22, including our journey to becoming a high reliability organization.

PATIENT ADVOCATES

PATIENT ADVOCATE BY THE NUMBERS

1 Patient Advocate Reports

The team handled 3,353 Patient Advocate Tracking System Replacements (PATS-R). PATS-R helps the team understand and address Veterans concerns.

2 Super Fast

Our patient advocate team is quick to ensure Veterans are heard! The average amount of days to resolve a patient's concern took 6.1 days.

3 How It Works

Veterans can voice their concerns to a patient advocate over the phone, email, in-person or through V-Signals. The patient advocate listens to the Veteran and creates a plan of action. The advocate works with each service line to address the patient's concern and reach a resolution in a timely manner.



Mark Taylor

Mark is an Army Veteran and has been in his role for six months. He previously worked in outreach and compliance for five years



Diane Bowen

Diane has been at Wilmington VA Medical Center for 35 years. She became a patient advocate in December 2019.



Charles Wilson

Charles is a retired Air Force Veteran and joined VA almost five years ago. He became a patient advocate in June 2019.

VETERAN FIRST

WILMINGTON AT A GLANCE

40
BEDS IN CLC

8
BEDS IN ICU

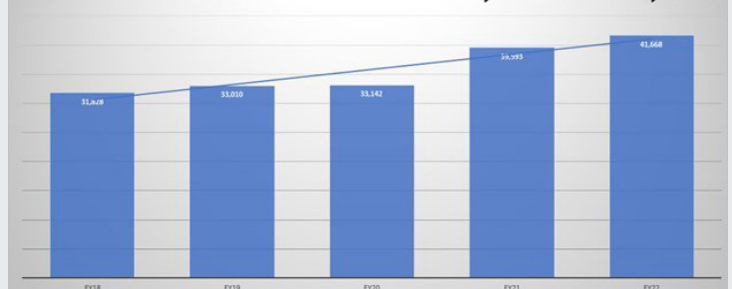
30
INPATIENT BEDS

- ➔ Total Admissions - 1,229
- ➔ Total ER Visits - 8,053
- ➔ Total Surgical Procedures - 3,947
- ➔ Total Appointments - 453,468
- ➔ Total Enrollment - 41,668

**\$386.3M OPERATING
BUDGET**

WILMINGTON VA GROWTH

Overall Veteran enrollment has increased by 31% over five years.



13%
WOMEN VETERANS

75.7%
AGED 55 AND ABOVE

48% OF VETERANS
GET CARE AT
OUR CBOCS

STATS



91.4%

OF VETERANS TRUST WILMINGTON VA FOR HEALTH CARE

PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Veterans across the nation are finding an improved experience when they go in for care at Wilmington thanks to the VA Patient Experience initiatives.

Based on FY22 V-Signals, Veterans trusted us 91.4% for their health care needs.

A perfect example of implementing patient experience is the Wilmington VA dialysis team. By using patient feedback

from V-Signals, the team purchased heated massage chairs to help patients feel more comfortable during long procedures.

Another example is offering Veterans the opportunity to self-identify their pronouns in My HealtheVet. This change lets providers address Veterans by their preferred pronoun and help patients feel more comfortable at VA.

VIRTUAL CARE STATISTICS

Type of virtual care	Number of Encounters
Home Telehealth (remote patient monitoring)	4,899
Clinical Video Telehealth (clinic to clinic)	35,597
Tele-Mental Health	18,516
VA Video Connect	26,083
VA Video Connect - Mental Health	17,993
Secure Messaging	32,697

Wilmington VA Medical Center ranked No. 1 in VISN 4 for having the most Veterans use My HealtheVet secure messaging.

VIRTUAL URGENT CARE

Call 1-833-835-3874 if you have an urgent medical or mental health question.

OUR TEAM

BY THE NUMBERS

1273

FULL-TIME STAFF

87

PROVIDERS

290

VETERAN-EMPLOYEES

387

NURSES



GOLDEN RULE

Diversity and Inclusion

At Wilmington VA and its outpatient clinics, creating an inclusive and safe environment for Veterans, guests, and staff is vital. We make significant strides in providing stellar health care when staff feel appreciated and understood.

Throughout 2022, our EEO team and Diversity and Inclusion Committee discussed DE&I topics at our monthly town halls with staff and Veterans. The team also shares best practices and communication

tips to better promote inclusion and diversity within teams.

After the 2022 All Employee Survey scores, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee worked with each outpatient clinic to create an action plan to improve inclusion.

Women's Health

Women Veterans are the fastest-growing population of Veterans within VA! Roughly 13% of Wilmington VA's 41,000+ enrollees are female.

As the number of women Veterans increases, so does our Women's Health team. Three new providers were hired to allow more access to care.

The team was recognized by VA's Office of Women's Health for its efforts on the Women Veterans ACHIEVE Quality Improvement Initiative. Women's Health improved processes in place related to quality, accessibility, and availability of comprehensive primary care.

The annual Women Veterans Health Care Summit brought in more than 30 attendees, where staff and women Veterans learned about VA health benefits and discussed the importance of preventative health care and access to mental health care.

The team can't wait to host the next Women Veterans Summit on April 6, 2023.

LGBTQ+ Veteran Care

In 2022, Wilmington VA welcomed its first LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator Barbara Gibbons. The LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator serves as an advocate and resource to diverse Veterans. If a patient feels unwelcomed or has a concern regarding their health care, they can go directly to the LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator. Additionally, the coordinator provides valuable resources and tools to LGBTQ+ Veterans.

Looking into 2023, the LGBTQ+ Veteran Care Coordinator plans to expand awareness by creating a local group for LGBTQ+ Veterans to discuss available VA health care services and resources targeted at LGBTQ+ Veterans. This group would be created in conjunction with Whole Health and align with its principal philosophy of “what matters most to you.”



BE THERE

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide Prevention has had the incredible opportunity to create a brand new Veteran Peer Suicide Prevention Program. The program will focus on three distinct aspects: crisis intervention, integration and reintegration of VA services, and camaraderie events.

For crisis intervention, the team will partner with local law enforcement, prosecutors' offices, and Sheriff's Office in Atlantic and Cape May County to identify police officers who can directly interact and help a Veteran in crisis. The second aspect is partnering with non-VA hospitals. This partnership will allow Wilmington VA's team to engage with Veterans if they arrive to a local emergency room while experiencing a crisis.

The team will also host "camaraderie events", which will be public events in the community. The goal of these events are to spread awareness about VA, focus on overall wellness, and connect Veterans to the community and to each other.



HONORING KENT

Kent Johnson was born on March 26, 1953, to Walter and June Johnson in Geneva, Illinois, growing up on a family farm. Kent worked on the family farm completing daily tasks and caring for the animals. This created the foundation for Kent's strong work ethic, as he often referenced his experiences as a child of the cows still needing to be milked, even if it was below freezing temperatures or a holiday.

Kent participated in 4-H club, raising a Hereford steer named David Hill. Kent developed his love for the performing arts as a young man. He enjoyed drama club, playing Macbeth in the high school play. In fact, Kent earned this role as a sophomore competing against several seniors. Kent also played the tuba!

Kent then earned his Bachelor's degree from Northern University and his Master's in Social Work from the University of Illinois Chicago. Kent resided in Chicago and frequently discussed his love of the city.

He would say, "well in the streets of Chicago....." followed by a story of his early days practicing social work. Kent enjoyed talking about Chicago, particularly his love of Home Run Inn pizza and Garrett Popcorn.

Kent, of course, loved the Chicago Bears, wearing his navy-blue lanyard with the orange Bears inscription every day. Kent was often heard jingling his keys in his hand. That sound was a relief to many as you knew when the keys were jingling, and that meant Kent was nearby.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR CLINICS



Southern New Jersey

Our Cape May, Cumberland, and Atlantic County VA Clinics have seen significant growth and modernization.

In 2022, Cape May began offering physical therapy services to its Veterans. Another exciting feature is the new Suicide Prevention Peer Support team, which engages with clinics and Veterans in southern NJ.



Dover

The Kent County VA Clinic in Dover continues to see growth!

In 2022, there was an enrollment-based market penetration of 65 percent. The teams in Kent County work closely with the Dover Air Force Base to educate servicemembers about VA benefits before they leave the military.



Georgetown

As we look forward, Wilmington VA is looking to expand additional health care services in southern Delaware and in the Sussex County region.

Additionally, community partnerships such as the Delaware Governor's Challenge has allowed our Veterans and team members to learn more about suicide prevention and resources available.

OUT IN THE COMMUNITY



OUTREACH

In Delaware, our outreach teams collaborated with Food Bank of Delaware to create VA health care resource drive-thru events. This allowed our team to identify Veteran families not aware of VA health care resources and enroll them on-the-spot. The team attended the annual Delaware Veterans Summit and spoke with officials like Senator Tom Carper and VA Secretary Denis McDonough to better understand how we can meet the needs of Veterans.

Over in Southern New Jersey, the team continues to build more partnerships with elected officials and community partners.

The New Jersey Governors Challenge has been an exciting venture which led to partnerships with the Joint Base McGuire, Dix, Lakehurst and the ETS Sponsorship Program. These partnerships have provided our

outreach team with access to the most recent transitioning service members in New Jersey.

They continue to work with local law enforcement, prosecutor's offices and partner with Hope One mobile units in Cape and Atlantic Counties to best engage and enroll Veterans for VA health care.

Our outreach efforts will continue to reach rural and low-income communities, continue to target female, LGBTQ+ and OIF/OEF Veterans, distribute educational materials on VA health care, PACT Act, and Mental Health resources.

In addition, our outreach team will continue to expand community relations with Veteran organizations, local health care and government agencies, and surrounding communities.



GROWTH



Over the past five years, Delaware and southern New Jersey's total enrollment increased by 31 percent. In 2022, Wilmington VA increased enrollment by 2,075 Veterans, and New Castle County had one of the largest enrollee populations in VISN 4.

Based on the 2022 Asset and Infrastructure Review on market data, Delaware's and southern New Jersey's Veteran population continues to grow as more people choose to live and retire in Sussex, Cape May and Cumberland Counties.

New Castle County's potential population growth through 2029 is up to 21,000 enrollees. Kent and Sussex County Veteran population has the potential to grow anywhere from 5,500 to 9,000 enrollees per county in 2029. In southern New Jersey, the Veteran population has potential to have a total of 1,800 to 5,400 enrollees per county in the next decade.

Innovation

HRO Journey

Industries with complex, high-hazard operations such as health care and aviation are considered a high reliability organization (HRO). Being an HRO means incorporating leadership commitment, process improvement and a culture of safety into daily operations and processes.

Our Quality Management team is working hard to bring HRO front of mind. In 2022, we welcomed a full-time systems redesign specialist. Systems Redesign looks at ways to make processes more effective or reduce waste by using LEAN Methodology. Roughly 50 staff members have completed a LEAN project and 96% of staff have taken the White Belt LEAN training.

Utilization Management was recognized as No. 1 in VISN 4 and a top team VA-wide for developing a process to ensure Veterans were admitted to the appropriate level of care. The team also participated in a national pilot project for readmission rates. The team successfully decreased readmission rates from 15.6% to under 6% for COPD.

The patient safety and risk management team stayed busy meeting face-to-face with clinical staff about fall risks, medicine errors and other potential risks. After the RaDonda Vaught case in Tennessee, the patient safety team jumped into action to provide a Patient Safety Standdown educating staff on fatal med errors and resources at hand to prevent patient harm.



Modernization

With our building infrastructure approaching 76 years old, Facilities and Engineering Service will be transitioning our renovation focus to the modernization of our outdated patient suites, increasing surgical capacity and restoration of the grounds and building exterior.

These projects range from the feasibility study to increase additional floors to our clinical addition wing, exterior wayfinding, roadway paving, pharmacy expansion and a 16,000 sq. ft expansion of the Community Living Center.

Over the past five years, Wilmington VA's Veteran population has grown by 31 percent. Because of this, we're hiring more staff and looking to expand more services in our rural communities.



PACT ACT

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances.

The PACT Act adds to the list of health conditions that we assume (or “presume”) are caused by exposure to these substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve.

Since its implementation in October, Wilmington VA has performed more than 3,000 toxic exposure screenings. Of those, 44% have been positive for a toxic exposure.

Wilmington VA had the distinct honor of hosting President Joe Biden and VA Secretary Denis McDonough at the Wilmington VA PACT Act Week of Action on Dec. 16, 2022 at the Beau Biden National Guard Reserve Center. More than 200 attendees and Veterans were

present to enroll in VA health care on-the-spot, file claims with Veterans Benefits Administration, and get screened for toxic exposures.

The PACT Act will require Wilmington VA staff to provide more health care services to eligible Veterans as well as enroll more Veterans into our facilities. Because of this, Wilmington VA is taking a proactive approach to hiring. Nationwide, VA needs to hire more than 52,000 employees to meet the needs of the growing Veteran population.

It’s imperative we spread the word about PACT Act to Veterans and encourage them to enroll in Wilmington VA health care. It’s also important to call on others in our networks and community to join VA’s noble mission and help us provide world-class health care at Wilmington VA and its clinics.



LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR PACT ACT BENEFITS

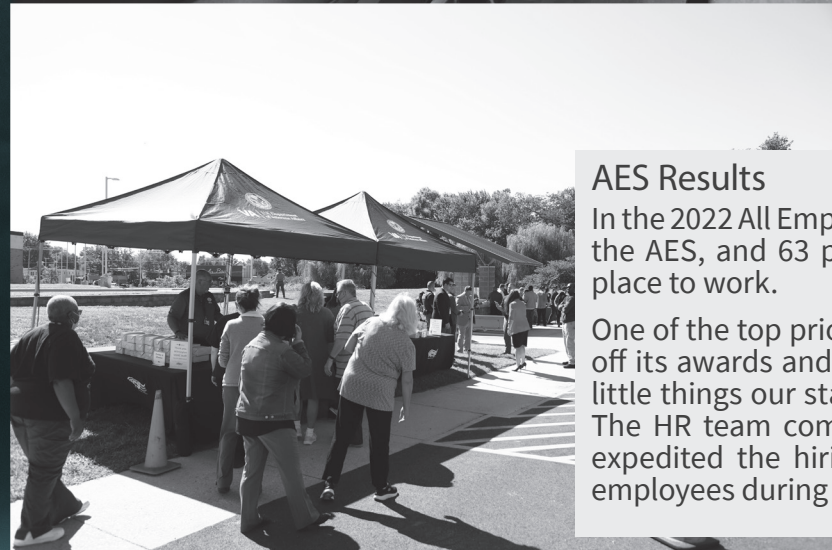
Visit www.va.gov/pact

GREAT PLACE TO WORK

ROUGHLY TWO-THIRDS OF STAFF RECOMMEND WILMINGTON VA

Wilmington VA staff members are some of the best around in VA! In 2022, we had 1,273 full-time team members, and 290 team members are Veterans. More than 600 performance awards were distributed to individual team members for their stellar work. Performance awards are awarded to employees who were rated as “excellent” or “outstanding” based on their performance metrics and evaluations.

Another indicator of performance wellbeing is the All Employee Survey (AES). The AES is an annual survey shared with VA staff members across the nation. The survey is anonymous and helps VA understand what matters most to staff at a national, regional and local level. The results from the survey are completely anonymous and shown as numerical data. For Wilmington VA Medical Center, staff said their biggest priority was workload. Following that, staff said growth, communication and recognition were other areas needing focus. Read more below to see how leadership uses the AES data and what changes are being made to continue to make Wilmington and its clinics top-notch!



AES Results

In the 2022 All Employee Survey (AES), 68 percent of staff completed the AES, and 63 percent recommended Wilmington VA as a best place to work.

One of the top priorities for staff was recognition. The team kicked off its awards and recognition committee to spotlight the big and little things our staff members do. Another priority was workload. The HR team completed an onboarding surge event where they expedited the hiring process. HR brought in more than 60 new employees during the event, which will help with workload.

IMPROVED

EMPLOYEE

SATISFACTION



Information to Keep

Appointment Scheduling Center Community Based Outpatient Clinics - NEW JERSEY

(800) 461-8262, press 2

Nurse Call Center

(800) 461-8262, press 3

Veterans Crisis Line

(800) 273-8255 (Press 1)

Community Based Outpatient Clinics -DELAWARE

Kent County CBOC

655 South Bay Road, Suite 3C
Dover, DE 19901-4659

Sussex County CBOC

21748 Roth Avenue
Georgetown, DE 19947



Atlantic County CBOC

1909 New Rd., Northfield, NJ 08225

Cape May County CBOC

3801 US 9 South, Unit 2
Rio Grande, NJ 08242

Cumberland County CBOC

79 W. Landis Ave, NJ 08360

Beneficiary Travel

(800) 461-8262, ext. 5212/4000

Billing Information

(800) 461-8262, ext. 5130

Office of Community Care

Customer Support: (302) 994-2511, ext. 7576

OCC National Contact Center: (877) 881-7618

Medical Records/Release of Information

(800) 461-8262, ext. 4133/5242

MyHealtheVet Coordinator

(800) 461-8262, ext. 5849

Patient Advocate

(800) 461-8262, ext. 5556

Prescription Refill Line

(800) 450-8262

Returning Veterans

(800) 461-8262, ext. 4763/4576

VA Benefits

(800) 827-1000

Vet Centers

Sussex Vet Center

(302) 225-9110 or
(877) 927-8387

South Jersey Vet Center

(609) 487-8387

Wilmington Vet Center

(302) 994-1660 or
(877) 927-8387

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Wilmington VA Medical Center